

Company and Community:  
The King Thompson Company and Upper Arlington, Ohio, 1913-1929

Research Thesis

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by

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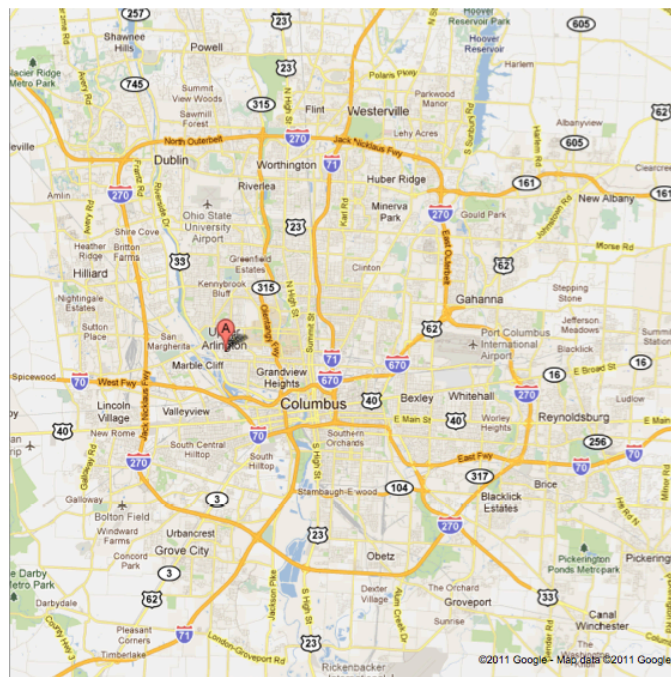
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## Introduction

The history of Upper Arlington, a suburb of Columbus, Ohio, has unique significance to the author of this thesis. The early history of the village is of particular interest, due to his personal exposure to and insight into Upper Arlington, and to familial connection to the suburb's founding, growth, and development. My childhood, youth, and early adulthood took place in Upper Arlington. In addition, my great-great-uncles and namesakes, brothers King and Ben Thompson, founded and developed Upper Arlington. My grandmother acted as chairman and editor of the leading collection of essays and primary sources on the history of the suburb, and my grandfather and mother have lectured and continue to lecture on the subject. My thesis concerns the history of Upper Arlington from 1913 to 1929—the earliest years of the suburb's history and the period in which my ancestors were most involved.



**Figure 1: Location of Upper Arlington, Ohio, 2011. Downtown Columbus is southeast. Source: *Upper Arlington, Ohio*. Google Maps. <<http://maps.google.com>>, accessed on 13 Nov. 2011.**

Three chapters compose this thesis. Chapter one puts Upper Arlington into the contexts of urban America and Columbus. Chapter two is about the founding and establishment of the suburb: the actors, goals and aspirations, and results. Finally, chapter three covers Upper Arlington in the 1920's. Each chapter investigates different aspects of Upper Arlington's historical narrative, but some themes run throughout the study.

Many people have helped me in the writing of this thesis. I especially wish to thank my thesis advisor, Professor Mansel Blackford of the Department of History at the Ohio State University. I also thank Professor David Stebenne of the Ohio State Department of History and the Moritz College of Law, and all involved with the *UA Archives*. Finally, I would like to thank my grandparents, Dr. Martin Peter Sayers and Marjorie Garvin Sayers.



## **Ch. 1**

### **Urban America, Columbus, and Upper Arlington**

Upper Arlington's founding and early development occurred as part of the urbanization of America. The United States officially became an urban nation in 1920.<sup>1</sup> Ohio became predominately urban a decade earlier, in 1910.<sup>2</sup> The development of early Columbus shares similarities and dissimilarities with American urban development in general. In 1880, Columbus was an overgrown town of 51,647 people; but by 1920 it was a booming metropolis boasting 237,031 residents.<sup>3</sup> The formation, expansion, and evolution of Columbus did not happen in a vacuum; and early Columbus' growth was marked by both contingencies and continuities. Columbus was shaped by, and shaped, a changing social, economic, and political environment. Between 1915 and 1939, the United States underwent tremendous changes in urbanization and urban demographics, as individual cities developed trajectories of their own. The developmental path of Columbus, while typical of that of many American urban areas, also diverged in important ways,

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<sup>1</sup> In 1920, a community was characterized as urban if it had 2,500 or more inhabitants. The important aspect of this 1920 United States census figure is that for the first time in modern American history, a majority of Americans lived in communities that could be defined as urban. The US was not yet a majority urban nation: until the 1940's, a majority of Americans did not live in major metro areas.

<sup>2</sup> Urban by this same definition.

<sup>3</sup> Census data from

<http://physics.bu.edu/~redner/projects/population/cities/columbus.html>.

several of which were noteworthy. Columbus' economy, balanced among government, service, and industrial sectors, provided a relatively stable context in which streetcar suburbs could develop—eventually leading to the building of planned suburban communities in the Garden City and City Beautiful traditions. Individuals and leaders, including developers such as King and Ben Thompson, greatly influenced the history of early Columbus.

### **The Rise of Urban America**

A number of themes run through the evolution of American metropolises in the pre-World-War-II era.<sup>4</sup> By World War I, large cities had developed in the U.S., as urban areas attracted droves of individuals seeking employment, excitement, and a new way of life. Housing shortages and expansions and contractions in employment hampered the formation of metropolitan regions; and urban regions won recognition in state and national politics. At this time, San Francisco, New York City, Boston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Chicago, and St. Louis were financial and industrial capitals. Cities were in flux, as industrial growth fueled the development of varied industrial-specialty metropolises such as Akron (rubber) and Youngstown, Ohio (steel) and Reading, Pennsylvania (railroads, automobiles, and automobile parts). From the mid-nineteenth century, many cities began to evolve around industry, rather than traditional magnets such as mining, farming, and trade.

The United States was changing, and the shifting culture was reflected in Manhattan's skyscrapers and Milwaukee's breweries—economic progress led rural

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<sup>4</sup> Blake McKelvey. *The Emergence of Metropolitan America, 1915-1966* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1968).

Americans and new immigrants to cities that had opportunities and that were increasingly differentiated from each other. Urban areas began to have identities, formed around industries and culture: Detroit became an automobile city, Pittsburgh a steel town. Regional population centers became larger metropolitan areas, and innovations in transportation and housing construction resulted in the proliferation of suburban neighborhoods. To some, “the spacious suburban towns...with their privately owned homes standing in loose rows of unfenced yards, seemed, as Philip Gibbs [a prominent World-War-I era British journalist, reporter, and novelist] put it, ‘a middle-class paradise.’”<sup>5</sup> Suburbs emerged as an alternative living space for upper-middle-class Americans to the downtown life, where slums were common and green space in short supply. Streetcars transported citizens to locales both within and outside of formal city limits. Progressive-Era reform movements sought to clean up cities through park commissions, public buildings, sanitary works, and the construction of highways.

Large central cities, many of which were led by strong-mayor systems, aimed to control and govern the growing suburban areas, but many of the suburban districts increasingly supported home-rule systems. Strong-mayor systems were adopted by big cities in Ohio such as Cleveland and Cincinnati, while suburban areas such as Columbus’ Upper Arlington preferred home-rule. The increasing popularity of the automobile had pivotal impacts on American cities, as more and more upper-middle-class citizens moved into the suburbs. The heavier traffic necessitated the construction of more complex road systems, which in turn required increased

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 8.

taxation. More sophisticated municipal governments came into being in cities and suburbs alike.

When the First World War erupted in Europe, the stream of Europeans moving into American cities was severely curtailed first by the war itself and then by federal legislation that severely restricted immigration. These changes inspired much more internal migration by whites and blacks living in rural areas, in the South especially, to the cities of the North and Far West. Northern industrialists, needing to fill wartime quotas, turned to this new labor force. The histories of Detroit and Akron represent key examples of this trend. Industrialists encouraged heavy migration into northern urban areas, areas into which these new migrants would have great difficulty assimilating, though not as much difficulty as Southern and Eastern Europeans would have had. Akron emerged as an early hub of the rubber industry, hosting important firms such as B.F. Goodrich. Rural newcomers were often discriminated against and intimidated, and African Americans in particular responded by forming communities and civic groups to respond to discrimination and violence. Lynching, mob attacks, and race riots were the worst expressions of racial prejudice in many industrialized American cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—including many in Ohio. African Americans, attracted to urban areas by higher wages and increased personal freedoms, met opportunity coupled with hardship, as racism marred both northern and southern cities.

Despite racial tensions, the 1920's witnessed great surges in metropolitan population, size, and industrial output. Los Angeles, Akron, and Detroit led cities in

rates of growth due to: film production, booms in health-care and real estate, and oil drilling; tire manufacturing; and car making, respectively. While many American cities were industrial, resort towns such as Miami, Atlantic City, and St. Petersburg also experienced explosive rates of growth. Increasingly important commercial and service sectors, rather than the industrial-production sector, were characteristic of some of the burgeoning metropolises of the era. Changes in housing standards, industrial technology, and transportation led to suburban and central city growth and development. Suburban flight, carried out in automobiles rather than the earlier streetcars, led some large cities, such as Columbus and Los Angeles, to incorporate surrounding areas into their boundaries, though this incorporation was not typical. Throughout the decade, Buffalo, Atlanta, and Cleveland had high rates of growth, both in the suburbs and in the central cities. High growth rates resulted in increased traffic, congestion, and automobile accidents in cities such as Rochester.

High growth rates affected housing and construction to a great extent. Housing shortages led to the development of residential skyscrapers in cities such as New York City, Chicago, and San Francisco. According to urban historian Blake McKelvey, the “skyscraper rivaled the automobile as the symbol of success in the twenties...one was the sign of a prosperous community, the other of an affluent family.”<sup>6</sup> Public-safety initiatives, improved and enlarged metropolitan governments, and municipal engineering addressed such issues as the need for downtown public parking spaces. Civic-center plans, such as those which were part of the City Beautiful movement, enhanced Cleveland, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 48.

and many other developing American cities. Urban life in the 1920's began to have an allure and culture all its own, and radio and popular magazines proclaimed a glamorous urban lifestyle that would be very difficult to attain in the upcoming decade.

The 1930's brought serious economic hardships to American cities. Widespread unemployment led city officials to appeal for both state and federal government aid. The formation of long-lasting, working relationships between cities and the federal government was something new in American life. After the stock market crash of 1929, the investments of roughly nine million shareholders were lost and workers across the United States lost their jobs. Migrants, immigrants, and native city-dwellers alike found themselves unemployed and without incomes. While Akron, Cincinnati, Detroit, and New York City introduced employment-stabilization practices, these measures barely diminished unemployment, and many cities, including Cincinnati, applied for emergency federal loans. In 1932, the unemployment rate in Ohio was 37 percent, as 50 percent were unemployed within the districts of Cleveland, and 80 percent in Toledo. With the election of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the federal government initiated an Emergency Banking Act and assorted public works projects under the New Deal. The Public Works Administration, Works Progress Administration, and National Industrial Recovery Act became increasingly important to urbanites. In an attempt to jumpstart employment, Roosevelt also created both blue- and white-collar works divisions in experimental projects such as the Resettlement Administration of 1935, which designed model towns and new communities. Citizen groups, union leaders, and

mayors appealed to the federal government for direct aid, and city and federal governments hammered out appropriations, agreements, and programs. Urban planners outlined new ideas for metropolises, and architects strove to rekindle public morale through the construction of new structures such as the Philadelphia Municipal Auditorium.

### **The Growth of Columbus**

The early history of Columbus both paralleled and diverged from the broad themes of American urban development between 1915 and 1939.<sup>7</sup> While the narrative of Columbus' development was in many ways typical of that of American cities generally, several unique factors and circumstances set it apart. After Columbus' streetcars were electrified in the early 1890's, "whole new 'streetcar suburbs' developed" three to five miles outside of the heart of the city.<sup>8</sup> In 1920, approximately 237,000 citizens lived in Columbus, a city then five miles in diameter. Of the 237,000—up from 80,000 in 1890—over 14,000 individuals were Italian immigrants, and the city's African American population doubled during the Great War from 1914 to 1918. While this immigration deeply affected the demographics of Columbus, the city was still less ethnically diverse than Cleveland or Cincinnati. As compared to Cleveland and Cincinnati during the era, Columbus had a higher percentage of African Americans and a lower percentage of European immigrants. In 1917, the Columbus Urban League developed in order to assist new African

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<sup>7</sup> Edward R. Lentz, *Columbus: the Story of a City* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

American residents from rural areas with employment and housing. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and church organizations also supported rural African Americans in their new northern locales, and through opposition to such events as a May, 1924 Ku Klux Klan march through Columbus.

In the 1920's, new buildings such as the Civic Center, City Hall, and the American Insurance Union Citadel (later the Leveque Tower) revitalized an ageing downtown. During the decade, "a modest postwar recession gave way to a period of unprecedented economic prosperity the likes of which would not be seen again for many years."<sup>9</sup> Automobile suburbs such as Upper Arlington and Bexley developed, and the Ohio and Palace theaters were constructed as new downtown entertainment centers. A new Columbus Zoo opened in 1929, and sporting events such as Ohio State University football games became increasingly popular. Jesse Owens was a local and national hero after the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin.

During the Great Depression, Columbus had very low population growth and residential development rates (though they were higher than those of Cleveland or Cincinnati), but grow it did. Federal works projects funded construction of the Ohio Departments Building and the Federal District Courthouse, but commercial expansion was practically nonexistent. Families tightened belts in the years before World War II.

Good, affordable housing remained a major problem in the early and mid-twentieth century. As the "idyllic appeal of the suburban neighborhood, with its well-appointed houses, paved streets, sanitary sewers, and generous lots soon

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 113.



captured the imagination of the American public...the dream of suburban home ownership remained elusive for the majority of American families” into the middle of the twentieth century, according to Douglas Knerr, business and urban historian.<sup>10</sup> The federal government began to encourage American home ownership in World War I through direct involvement in housing issues. Fueled by a crucial need to provide living spaces for industrial defense workers, the federal government promoted the construction of worker communities and suburbs across the country. The successes of the 1920’s brought many more Americans into the middle class, and “the single-family suburban home [became] the center of a new productive and consumptive American lifestyle.”<sup>11</sup> The crash of 1929 and housing-market crisis led to Depression-era housing conditions that sharply contrasted with the seeming opulence of the earlier 1920’s. In the Depression Decade, prefabricated construction methods, such as those employed by the Lustron Corporation of Columbus after World War II, were championed as a solution to the various issues of housing shortages. New Deal initiatives brought cities and the federal government into closer interaction, as most citizens could not afford to purchase homes. As the bottom fell out of the construction industry, the federal government sponsored a study of new housing technologies and research into low-cost, prefabricated housing took place at universities and private firms alike.

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<sup>10</sup>Douglas Knerr, *Suburban Steel: the Magnificent Failure of the Lustron Corporation, 1945-1951* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004), 22.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 30. The suburbs, though, were still almost entirely upper-middle-class places of residence in the 1920’s.

While employment, housing construction, and growth rates were low in Columbus in the 1930's, the city fared better than many metropolises, including Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago. The diversified Columbus economy, "more or less equally balanced among government, commercial, industrial, and service employment...tends not to fall as fast or as far in economic hard times."<sup>12</sup>

Zoning and urban-planning practices set Columbus apart, in terms of growth and development from most other cities in Ohio.<sup>13</sup> Zoning measures were established elsewhere, but Columbus was particularly forward-looking. Leading the way were developers. The King Thompson Company, celebrated nationally as early as 1916, was a progressive Columbus community design firm. As a realtor-subdivider, Thompson served on the National Association of Real Estate Board's City Planning Committee and developed various districts of Columbus. In 1915, Thompson asserted that, "good planning, including curved streets, was the key to gaining a competitive sales edge in what was clearly a buyer's market for subdivision lots."<sup>14</sup> He considered beautification as central to development. Landscape architecture, zoning regulations, park space, and planned streets and thoroughfares characterized a 1908 Columbus city plan, which Thompson—a proponent of strategic urban planning—embraced.

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<sup>12</sup> Lentz, *Columbus*, 116.

<sup>13</sup> Marc A. Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders: the American Real Estate Industry and Urban Land Planning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

<sup>14</sup> As quoted in Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders*, 63.

Columbus as a case study provides insights into American urban development. As was typical of metropolises during the era, there was a shift from streetcars to automobiles—a shift that had many varied impacts, not least of which was the development of Columbus' suburbs. The city unified behind the effort to wage the First World War and, similarly to what occurred in other urban areas, was shaped by waves of Italian immigrants and African American and white rural migrants.<sup>15</sup> Civic groups, clubs, and churches aided rural African American migrants. Large national firms such as the Lustron Corporation called Columbus home in the 1940's, and suburbanization took place in the city starting mostly in the early 1910's. With the First World War, the federal government further encouraged home ownership, and developers such as King Thompson designed and executed urban plans. As was characteristic of many American urban areas, the 1920's were a boom period in Columbus, the 1930's, a bust. New Deal public works projects provided some relief from very high unemployment, but housing construction and population growth were at low levels—though Columbus' levels were higher than those of Cleveland or Cincinnati.

While Columbus had many similarities to the general path of American urban development, the city's identity is comprised of other not-commonly-shared elements as well. The metropolis, like many urban areas, was affected by housing shortages and unemployment during the Great Depression. However, uniquely for Ohio, the city's diversified economy provided something of a safety net during the

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<sup>15</sup> The German-American community was uniquely affected by World War I, and often experienced maltreatment by other Americans during the era.

economic downturn. In other ways as well, Columbus departed from major trends in urban development and housing growth. The capital remained “more of a town than a metropolis” and through its early history was differentiated from other cities by its suburbs, the Ohio State University, and by individuals such as King Thompson, Eddie Rickenbacker, and Jesse Owens.<sup>16</sup> As was the case in other urban areas, the citizens of Columbus were shaped by, and shaped, the city itself. It was in this complex and fluid urban situation that the suburb of Upper Arlington developed—the topic of this thesis.

If Columbus remained more of an overgrown town than a fully developed city at the time of the First World War, it was, nonetheless, becoming a city with suburbs. Upper Arlington was one of the most important, and Chapter 2 of this thesis examines the founding of Upper Arlington: the actors, objectives, and initial results of its development. Two broad themes course through the history of Upper Arlington from the suburb’s inception through the 1930’s. Upper Arlington was, and is, both typical and atypical of urban development and community planning traditions. Furthermore, the historical narrative of Upper Arlington is one of visions meeting contingencies—resulting in a conflict between plan and reality.

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<sup>16</sup> Lentz, *Columbus*, 108.

## Ch. 2

### **The Founding of Upper Arlington: People, Motives, and Initial Results**

On Christmas Eve 1913, two brothers met with a prominent landowner and purchased nearly one thousand acres of farmland—to carry out a shared vision and start a new subdivision community in Columbus. As King and Ben Thompson met with James Miller, the Thompson brothers were doing what many urban developers were engaged in across the United States: designing and developing residential districts for upper-middle-class Americans.<sup>17</sup>

Upper Arlington was (and is) a suburb located in the northwestern part of the Columbus, Ohio metropolitan area. Upper Arlington was founded and developed by King and Ben Thompson in the late 1910's, growing from a collection of six houses on ten roads to a city of approximately 35,000 residents in 2011.<sup>18</sup> Upper

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<sup>17</sup> Suburban districts were home to the top economic fifth of the American public only, in all important respects, until after World War II. Residents of Upper Arlington in the 1910's and 1920's tended to be upper-middle-class or more elite.

<sup>18</sup> Marjorie Garvin Sayers, ed., *History of Upper Arlington: a Suburb of Columbus, Ohio* (Columbus, Ohio: Upper Arlington Historical Society, 1977), 32. This collection of 23 essays by various Upper Arlingtonians is at once a celebration of the nation's bicentennial and of the city of Upper Arlington's history and evolution, and the volume includes photographs, architectural renderings of homes and properties,

Arlington is today a small city, responding to a changing economic, social, and political context. Upper Arlington's narrative is symbolic of the urban growth and suburban development of the United States, evolving through both contingencies and continuities. Upper Arlington was both typical and atypical of urban development and community planning practices, and the historical narrative of Upper Arlington is one of visions meeting contingencies.

As mentioned above, the Thompson brothers purchased almost one thousand acres from landowner James Miller upon which to site Upper Arlington. They had previously developed tracts of land north and east of the Ohio State University in Columbus, and sought to make Upper Arlington the premier suburb of Columbus.<sup>19</sup> The Thompson brothers chose the Miller farm for three basic reasons: its high ground, nearness to both the city center of Columbus and the Ohio State University, and an absence of industrial pollution or contamination. A photograph from the time shows the James Miller farm, circa 1900. The photograph's perspective is eastward from Dublin Pike, and depicts the farmland that would be transformed into the first roadways, buildings, and homes of Upper Arlington. The photo conveys the vast expanse of the Miller farm—a mansion surrounded by manicured fields and squared hedges. The main farmhouse sitting high on the hill, surrounded by trees, had at various times hosted Annie Oakley and President Warren G. Harding. Heavy capital investment in land and property is evident. The maps, and a plethora of Upper Arlington reference materials. Sayers is the author's grandmother.

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<sup>19</sup> Sayers, *History of Upper Arlington*, 77.

high ground and cleanliness of the farm substantiate the Thompson brothers' claims regarding the attractive characteristics for its development.<sup>20</sup>



Figure 2: James Miller farm, circa 1900. Source: Dr. Martin P. Sayers, Marjorie G. Sayers, and Elaine S. Buck. *Thompson and Upper Arlington Images*. Digital image. Personal Collection. Also printed in Sayers, *History of Upper Arlington*, cited as from Eliza Howard Mussman collection.

The Upper Arlington Company, under King and Ben Thompson as president and vice president, respectively, was formed in 1917. King was the visionary and driving partner, Ben the quiet implementer. The ancestry of King and Ben Thompson, and Upper Arlington's narrative, "arose from firm roots in Brown County on the Ohio River where Edward Thompson waited across the river as the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 72.

final Ohio-Indian wars were fought.”<sup>21</sup> Edward Thompson would later assist in the founding of the city of Georgetown, the county seat, prior to the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. Edward Thompson was the great-grandfather of King and Ben Thompson. The Thompson brothers’ father, Frank William Thompson, was “an itinerant farmer, trader and tobacco buyer,” and during their childhoods and young adulthoods, King and Ben Thompson often operated their father’s farm while Frank William Thompson suffered from rheumatic heart disease.<sup>22</sup> King and Ben Thompson, born in 1876 and 1878, respectively, attended Georgetown Academy for their early educations, balancing work on the family farm and in the classroom. Following graduation from Georgetown Academy, King taught for a period of two years in the local school system to gather funds to attend the Ohio State University. Earning a paltry \$30 per month in his teaching position, King decided against teaching as a career. Around this time, brother Ben entered an apprenticeship in the hardware business.<sup>23</sup> Frank William Thompson was not able to contribute funds to King’s education at Ohio State, but gave his son a horse and wagon.

In early summer 1895, King Thompson departed for the 150-mile journey to Columbus. King was not an experienced traveller, and “was greater impressed by

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<sup>21</sup> Sayers, Martin Peter. "Upper Arlington History." Various Venues, Columbus. Lecture. Memoir written in mid-1980's by Dr. Martin Peter Sayers—based on recollections of interviews with his uncles, King and Ben Thompson.

<sup>22</sup> Sayers, Martin Peter. "Upper Arlington History."

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.



the immensity of Ohio.”<sup>24</sup> On his first night in Columbus, King slept in his wagon at the Union Rail Station—periodically awakened by others at the station seeking drayage and transportation. King’s horse proved to be a linchpin to King’s successes: King Thompson financed his room and board through the drayage of beer. King opened a boarding house on campus and came to be known as a businessman-student around Columbus. President of his Ohio State University senior class, King opened another boarding house and built and operated a bookstore with a classmate named Frank C. Long.<sup>25</sup> Two years later, the university bought the supply and bookstore at a significant profit to Long and Thompson. Long later opened a competing bookstore at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and High Street.

King Thompson became increasingly interested in the real estate market, and entered law school “in order to be more effective in real estate” but did not graduate.<sup>26</sup> Through buying and reselling land east of Ohio State campus, King accumulated capital and opened a real estate office at Broad and High Streets downtown. At this point, Ben Thompson returned from his apprenticeship in Mansfield as a fully developed businessman, versed in management and the mechanics of business. In partnership with his brother, and with developer Charles Johnson, King Thompson developed and subdivided Bexley Park in the neighborhood of Bexley—gaining “valuable experience in curb setting, paving,

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

engineering, utilities, sanitation, sidewalks and public relations.”<sup>27</sup> Between 1903 and 1910, the Thompson brothers further developed vacant land between the Ohio State University and Worthington, Clintonville, and most of Grandview. King and Ben Thompson built a road northwest between Goodale Street and North Star Road, called Northwest Boulevard. With extensive experience in urban development and subdivision, the Thompsons established the Upper Arlington Company in 1917 and set out to create a “beautiful city on the hill above the confluence of the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers.”<sup>28</sup>

In the Thompsons’ new development, construction of homes and city development were governed by protective land-use restrictions and property covenants, providing for permanent green spaces, substantial setbacks, and wide streets. Racial and ethnic covenants intolerantly excluded African Americans and individuals of Jewish faith from Upper Arlington. This was typical of the time period. In the words of a leading expert on Upper Arlington history, “laws on the books said ‘you can’t sell to a black person’ ...it was a touchy subject...a lot of people were petty.”<sup>29</sup> Innovative zoning mandates along the lines of the Garden City Movement ensured large lots and the establishment of city parks. Such modern city planning and landscape architecture were becoming more common in planned upscale suburban developments in this era, and the Thompsons were forward thinking in

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Marjorie Garvin Sayers by the author, June 3, 2010, in Columbus, Ohio.

their approach. The Upper Arlington Company laid streets, installed street lighting, and planted trees in the late 1910's.<sup>30</sup> In 1918, the few early residents of the village elected James Miller—the same individual who sold the initial Country Club District (an early name for the city of Upper Arlington, a term chosen by King Thompson to reference both the exclusivity of the suburb and the presence of country clubs) land tract to the Thompsons—mayor of the first Village Commission, which also included Ben Thompson among other community leaders. During the early years of Upper Arlington, the visions of the Thompson brothers began to come to fruition as development took a calculated, comprehensive course.

The first Village Commission, further explained in chapter 3, set procedural and governmental precedents, and provided utilities and city services such as mail delivery to residents. Upper Arlington was characterized by a rather strict development plan, and home-rule was a top priority. In its early years, Upper Arlington adopted a charter and repeatedly rejected annexation to the City of Columbus.<sup>31</sup> Over time, the suburb established parks and recreation, public health measures, and building and zoning regulations. The King Thompson and Upper Arlington Companies constructed municipal buildings in the young city.

Disrupting the early evolution of the Village of Upper Arlington and the implementation of the Thompsons' visions and strategies, the federal government established Camp Willis in the young community in 1916. Camp Willis was an Ohio National Guard camp and training ground for 11,000 troops, constructed in the

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<sup>30</sup> Sayers, *History of Upper Arlington*, 38.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

heart of Upper Arlington.<sup>32</sup> The troops were preparing for conflict on the American-Mexican border, and were later sent to El Paso, Texas. The impact on the emerging community, due to traffic, transport, and training, was extensive. King and Ben Thompson had to regroup, with King's \$46,000 federal damages collection only denting the total costs imposed on Upper Arlington by Camp Willis. The installment of Camp Willis was a prime example of a contingency meeting the Thompson brothers' visions. The camp considerably damaged the community, as barracks and mud replaced planned lots, young trees, and protected green spaces.

Figure 3: Camp Willis (Ohio National Guard), 1916. Source: Dr. Martin P. Sayers, Marjorie G. Sayers, and Gene S. Buck. Thompson and Upper Arlington Images. Digital image. Personal Collection.



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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 92.

King and Ben Thompson's plans and initiatives for Upper Arlington, which were affected and shaped by the forced establishment of Camp Willis, may be seen as early as 1914, when King was acting as president of the King Thompson Company and Ben as treasurer. A very early promotional text published by the King Thompson Company outlined "an honest effort to build a city beautiful" northwest of Columbus, to be called the Country Club District, or Upper Arlington.<sup>33</sup> The booklet, an informational summary of the visions of the King Thompson Company, explained that after an extensive, nationwide search among city planners and landscape architects, William Pitkin Jr. of Rochester, New York had been chosen to assist the Company in the development of this new district. Pitkin was known for modern designs, which emphasized trees and featured winding roads following the natural contours of the land. The publication's foreword outlined the master plan of development—of one comprehensive community design composed of smaller units. Drawing on experiences in his division and development of other areas of Columbus, King Thompson described Upper Arlington as a "protected residence property... a carefully regulated and supervised development rather than a hurried growth improperly restricted".<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>*The Country Club District; 1000 Acres Restricted; Upper Arlington* (Columbus: King Thompson, 1914), 2. PDF file. Available through *List of Historical Resources*, the Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society, <<http://www.ghmchs.org/resource-list.html>>.

<sup>34</sup> *The Country Club District*, 2.

The King Thompson Company sought to create a desirable community for Columbus' elite, a kind of Garden City with parkways, wide and winding streets, significant setbacks, and "an openness seen only in the more expensive suburban neighborhoods."<sup>35</sup> The approach of the Thompson brothers was based on the premise that if the King Thompson Company sold the first Country Club District lots at relatively low prices, the homes would sharply increase in value due to Upper Arlington's exclusivity and the further development of the suburb. Thus, both the potential buyers of the lots *and* the King Thompson Company would eventually profit. King Thompson emphasized the King Thompson Company's successful developments of the area east of the Ohio State University, north of Chittenden Avenue, and both south and north of North Broadway. Ensuring the quality of the Country Club District, through restrictions and zoning, was central to the Comprehensive Plan for the development of Upper Arlington.

Some of the motives behind the creation of the Country Club District may be seen in King Thompson's critique of the development of Columbus' Indianola District. Upper Arlington would not be tarnished by what Thompson described as haphazard growth there: ill-maintained yards, misplaced, large apartment complexes, inexpensive properties next to expensive properties, and the intermingling of residences, shops, and stores. This same location east of Ohio State University campus might have been a Garden City, if it had been planned as a single unit and controlled by one group, such as the King Thompson Company. The King Thompson Company owned parts and pieces of the Indianola district, but did not

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 2.

have complete control over its development. By contrast, in the Country Club District, the Thompson brothers visualized one thousand acres of restricted land, to be developed in a controlled, thoroughly planned way.

The Country Club District was to be developed on the Miller Farm, demarcated by Fifth Avenue on the south, North Star Avenue on the east, Lane Avenue on the north, and on the west by Dublin Boulevard and a dam on the Scioto River. The District would later be named Upper Arlington, but was initially called the Country Club District due to its closeness to the Arlington Country Club, the Columbus Gun Club, and a planned eighteen-hole golf course, later the Scioto Country Club. The District was to be under one development plan and one management, for “protection against the injurious effects of adjoining property.”<sup>36</sup>

Within three and one-half miles, in a straight line, from the business center of Columbus, Upper Arlington was planned to have lush landscapes “to suit every possible taste.”<sup>37</sup> “Good architecture,” seen in Grandview and Marble Cliff to the south of the Country Club District, would be the only sort allowed in the new community, and high standards would benefit the values of all properties. King Thompson’s writings reflected an implicit association between home architecture and the character of those living within, and the Country Club District was to have quality of both structure and inhabitants. The chosen landscape architecture would focus on “saving hills and dales,” and boulevards, parks, churches, and playgrounds

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<sup>36</sup> *The Country Club District*, 13.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

would have protected acreage.<sup>38</sup> The Thompson brothers' twelve years of experience in subdividing properties would culminate in the creation of Upper Arlington.

The plan of development was to be executed on the Miller Farm due to the land's location, attractiveness, and environment. The Miller Farm was close to Columbus' city center, and was on high ground—an aspect especially important in the context of the Ohio Flood of 1913. The city streetcar service, then just reaching the southern end of the district, and other public services were also considered. The Thompson brothers built and established Northwest Boulevard as an artery in the northwestern part of Columbus, and Ben Thompson was president of the Northwest Boulevard Company, a firm that acted as the liaison with the Franklin County Commissioner.<sup>39</sup> King Thompson noted the clean, pure air north of downtown, and the general trend of Columbus residents to move northward. A twenty-minute city streetcar ride from downtown, the Country Club District was “close to the city but free from its smoke.”<sup>40</sup> In the 1910's and today, the prevailing winds in central Ohio are west to east. It seemed that Columbus was trending to grow in the northwest direction—as the sewers were southward—and in this part of the city, the landscape was diverse, healthy, and beautiful.

Dreaming and drawing up plans was one thing, but creating a new, elite community quite another, as the Thompsons soon discovered. Chapter 3 looks at

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>39</sup> Sayers, *History of Upper Arlington*, 95.

<sup>40</sup> *The Country Club District*, 17.



their efforts to launch Upper Arlington as a concept and as a reality: a continuation and variation of the City Beautiful and Garden City traditions. Chapter 3 examines the successes and shortcomings of the Thompson brothers between 1920 and 1929.

### Ch. 3 The 1920's: Successes and Shortcomings

A fledgling Upper Arlington, founded just two years earlier, contained 620 residents in 1920, carried to and from downtown Columbus by “direct passenger and freight service provided by the Columbus Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad.”<sup>41</sup> The coming decade would see dramatic changes, both within Upper Arlington—fueled by the advents of radio, automobiles, and consumer durables such as refrigerators, and the expansion of electricity—and in the relationship between Upper Arlington and its founders, King and Ben Thompson. In 1930, the suburb would house 3,059 residents, the United States would be in very different social and economic circumstances, and the Thompson brothers would be losing their grip on the execution of their plans and dreams.<sup>42</sup>

Two general themes continued to characterize the history of Upper Arlington from 1920 to 1929: that Upper Arlington’s path was both typical and atypical of urban development and community planning in the United States; and that the historical narrative of Upper Arlington was one of visions meeting contingencies—the merging of plan and reality. In the years leading up to the Great Depression, the suburb, like the United States more generally, boomed and annexed land to the east and north of the original Country Club District. The mud and shacks of Camp Willis

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<sup>41</sup> Sayers, *History of Upper Arlington*, 96.

<sup>42</sup> Galen R. Rarick, *Upper Arlington: Glimpses of Its First 50 Years* (Upper Arlington: Rarick, 1968), 15. This text is a “brief history of the city of Upper Arlington, Ohio...published in observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the city’s founding.”

were long gone, replaced by young brick structures on neat lots, decorative stone walls, streetlights, and schools and pupils. Upper Arlington had “been a suburban residential community—rather than an isolated community unto itself—from the beginning.” In the words of the King Thompson Company, people living in Upper Arlington were “confident that the future is better than the past, confident that a larger number of people in the future will desire more sunlight and flowers around their homes; more beauty in the exterior of their homes and more modern comfort inside.”<sup>43</sup> Visions and ideas were becoming actualities, though the meshing of the two was far from simple; the Thompsons encountered serious difficulties as the 1920’s came to a close.

As Upper Arlington grew and changed, there was an increasing need for institutions and city services. In the early 1920’s, D.B. Sayers, the Thompsons’ brother-in-law and former captain of the Ohio State University football team, “drew up the engineering plans and specifications and estimated costs for the streets and other developments” as the young suburb expanded and changed.<sup>44</sup> Sayers was a highly trained city engineer, and the King Thompson Company hired Sayers due to both his familial connection, through Loula Thompson Sayers, and his skills in large-scale organization and city design. Sayers addressed micro- and macro-level issues in Upper Arlington, often giving presentations before the Village Commission and working closely with the Thompson brothers. King Thompson and his quiet partner Ben proceeded to add tracts to Upper Arlington, issuing a standing order that all

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 14.

Indian remains and artifacts excavated during construction be preserved and donated to the Ohio State University. In 1921, a new school was built to accommodate the growing population. Schooling that had previously taken place in King Thompson's basement and later in converted Camp Willis barracks now had a permanent home.<sup>45</sup> *The Norwester*, a "combination newspaper and community bulletin board" was published monthly by the Upper Arlington Company, the name used for the development wing of King Thompson Company after March, 1917.<sup>46</sup> *The Norwester* was the primary source of local news for the increasing population. By 1920, Upper Arlington had extended its official boundaries northward to include Lane Avenue, between Tremont Road and Northwest Boulevard. The Village Commission set ordinances in 1922 "which prohibited the running-at-large in the village of 'certain livestock,'" later outlawing waterfowl domestication.<sup>47</sup>

In the 1920's, King and Ben Thompson promoted and cultivated a general feeling of community within Upper Arlington. The Thompsons "held parties for all residents in the Gun Club on Fifth Avenue when the very first streets were still being put through...[and] a New Year's Day tea for everyone was an annual affair at King Thompson's home until the numbers grew too large."<sup>48</sup> As mentioned above, the first school in Upper Arlington was in the basement of King Thompson's house, and King himself underwrote the Board of Education's loan. A brand new school,

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 17.

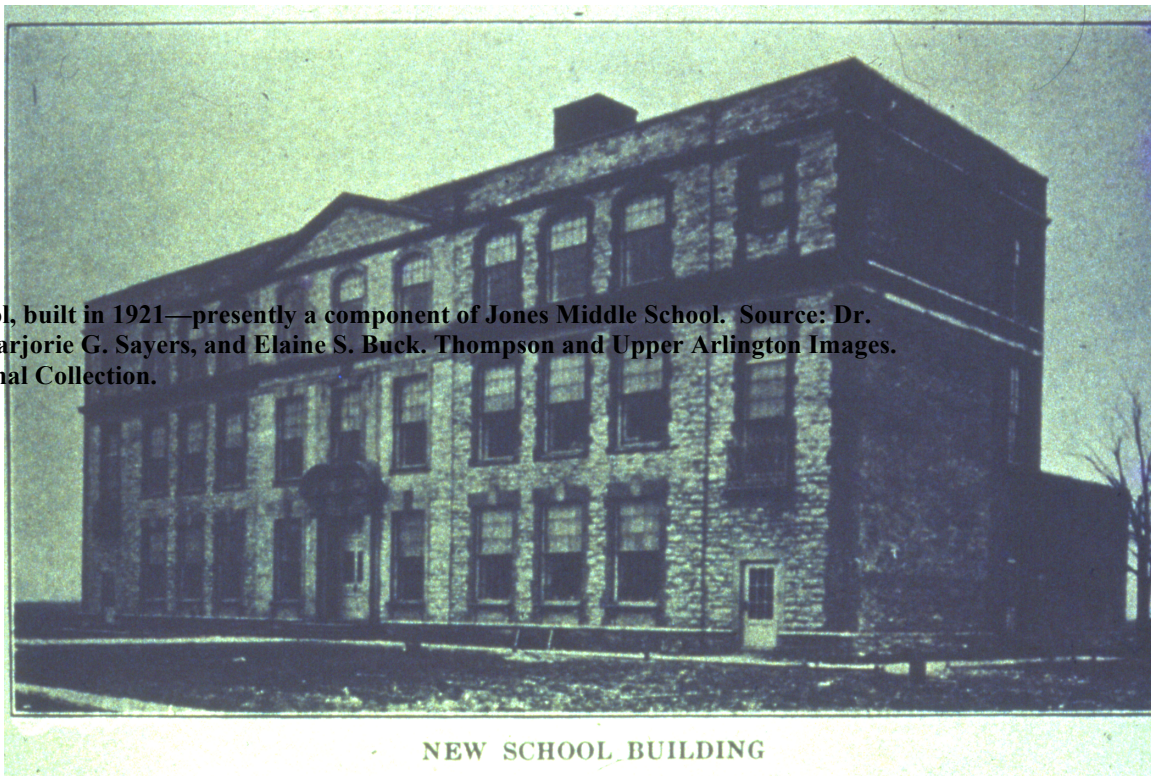
<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>47</sup> Sayers, *History of Upper Arlington*, 35.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 78.

constructed in 1921, is seen in a photograph from the era. The newness of the school is evident in the muddy grounds and lack of vegetation. An important aspect of the pervading sense of community was an emphasis on quality education in the suburb.

Figure 4: New school, built in 1921—presently a component of Jones Middle School. Source: Dr. Martin P. Sayers, Marjorie G. Sayers, and Elaine S. Buck. Thompson and Upper Arlington Images. Historical image. Personal Collection.



As early institutions developed, government and business worked jointly to spur the commercial growth of Upper Arlington. King Thompson found his niche developing Upper Arlington and reselling properties, while Ben served on the Village Commission and headed the Northwest Boulevard Company. It was no longer possible for the Thompson brothers to oversee and control every aspect of the development of the suburb. After “the holding of [the first Village Commission]

election on June 29, 1918...elected were James T. Miller, mayor; Warren A. Armstrong, treasurer; Edward D. Howard, clerk; and William Kern, Paul G. Spence, E.J. Crane, J.J. Morgan, Frank P. Rogers, and J.E. Harris as village commissioners.”<sup>49</sup> Ben Thompson was elected marshal by a slim margin. Village commissioners had to be residents of the suburb, who would act as electors of a commission president, who would also serve as mayor. Early “Village Commission concerns in 1918 included the cost of water for the village, the filling of Arlington Avenue with gravel (instead of cinders), the necessity for house numbering so that mail could be delivered to homes within the village, and the recommendation that residents equip their homes with the ‘Nu Ex’ fire extinguisher as an immediate safeguard against fire.”<sup>50</sup> Later, in the 1920’s, the elected Village Commission addressed many community issues, while planning, developing, and designing the suburban spaces, neighborhoods, and streets were primarily reserved for King Thompson, William Pitkin Jr., and D.B. Sayers. The Upper Arlington Company’s paramount objectives continued to include preservation and incorporation of green spaces; thorough suburban planning and delivery of city services; and maintenance of a sense of community as the district grew in size and population.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 26.





Figure 5: First Village Commission: James Miller, back, center, Ben Thompson, back, right. Source: Martin P. Sayers, Marjorie G. Sayers, and Elaine S. Buck. Thompson and Upper Arlington homes. Digital image from Personal Collection. Also printed in Sayers, *History of Upper Arlington*, cited from Irma Thompson Rimbach collection.

The Upper Arlington Company sought to adhere to the original plans for the suburb: “1) the district was to be under one management, with a Master Plan; 2) each house was to be located with respect to the location of houses on adjoining lots; and 3) each lot was to be graded and landscaped so as to make it blend in well with surrounding areas.”<sup>51</sup> The Upper Arlington Company and Village Commission

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<sup>51</sup> *The Country Club District; 1000 Acres Restricted; Upper Arlington*. Reprinted in Rarick, *Upper Arlington: Glimpses of Its First 50 Years*, and Sayers, *History of Upper Arlington*, 37. According to Rarick, King Thompson toured much of the United States in order to study and inspect suburban communities. Rarick claims, “he was

considered jointly amenities, water services, sewers, and transportation. In the years before 1925, the Village Commission issued bonds to fund preparation and construction of materials for street lighting, and all of the streets in the village were resurfaced in 1927.<sup>52</sup>

The ambitions of the Thompsons to create a new, elite community—the premier suburb of Columbus—appeared to be coming to fruition as city services beautified Upper Arlington, population growth stimulated home construction, and Columbus business leaders and academics settled in Upper Arlington. Noted “Who’s Who in Upper Arlington” members, as spotlighted in *The Norwester*, included William S. Brown, “a young executive of the Columbus Mill and Supply Company,” Joseph F. Barker, “professor of agricultural chemistry and soils at Ohio State University,” Evan J. Crane, “editor of Chemical Abstracts,” John Fenton, “in the shoe business,” Charles A. Gibson, “president of Gibson-Spence Coal Company,” and Edward D. Howard, “lawyer, former assistant secretary for Ohio, former member of Columbus City Council,” among chosen others.<sup>53</sup> The Upper Arlington Company-funded newsletter not surprisingly mirrored King Thompson’s concerns with exclusivity and elitism.

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especially impressed with Kansas City’s Country Club District which had been developed by his friend, J.D. Nichols” (*Upper Arlington: Glimpses of Its First 50 Years*, 5). Kansas City was a national leader then in city planning.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>53</sup> *The Norwester*, Upper Arlington, 1918. As cited in Rarick, *Upper Arlington: Glimpses of Its First 50 Years*, 28.



As Upper Arlington grew, stores and small businesses took root. Between 1920 and 1930, a streetcar line was laid out in Upper Arlington, carrying two large, modern cars between Columbus and the suburb. Streetcars played a critical role in the urban growth of Upper Arlington until 1936, when the streetcar service could no longer compete with the growing popularity of the automobile.<sup>54</sup> There was somewhat of a shift from streetcars to autos in the later part of the 1920's, as automobiles became less expensive and more reliable, but streetcars remained important to the village. Phil C. Houston, Don M. Casto, and Ralph Campbell, working independently, built the Mallway in the center of southern Upper Arlington in 1926, bringing in the Kroger Company and a city pharmacy—thus creating a business center in the suburb well before the national emergence of modern shopping centers.<sup>55</sup> Casto founded the Casto real estate company, a firm that continues operations today. A pioneering developer employed by the Upper Arlington Company, Casto was later “internationally recognized as a pioneer in the shopping center industry.”<sup>56</sup> Radio “commentator Paul Harvey described Don M. Casto, Sr. as ‘the man who changed the shopping habits of the free world’ after his death in 1963.”<sup>57</sup> Drugstores and barbershops followed the construction of the Mallway, along with a lending library in 1931. As the population of the city

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<sup>54</sup> Sayers, *History of Upper Arlington*, 103.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>56</sup> *Our History*. CASTO, third-generation full-service real estate company.

<<http://castoinfo.com/about/history.php>>, accessed on 6 Nov. 2011.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

increased and developers established such hubs of business, Upper Arlington also attracted doctors and dentists. These professionals had offices in the North and South Mallway buildings on Arlington Avenue north and south of the mall.

During this period, there was also cultural, educational, and artistic development.<sup>58</sup> There were an elementary school, community newspapers, and community parties. In 1925, the first graduating class of Upper Arlington High School welcomed William Oxley Thompson, influential president of the Ohio State University from 1899 to 1925, to deliver the commencement address.<sup>59</sup> Many Ohio State University professors were Upper Arlington community leaders and added cultural and intellectual diversity.

The roles of King and Ben Thompson in determining the details and particulars of Upper Arlington in the 1920's may be studied with the Upper Arlington archives.<sup>60</sup> In the records of the proceedings of the municipal

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<sup>58</sup> *The Norwester*, 1917-1922, *The Community News*, 1922-1929, and *The Tri-Village News*, 1930-present. As cited in Sayers, *History of Upper Arlington*, 285 and 279.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>60</sup> *UA Archives: Upper Arlington History*. Upper Arlington Public Library, Upper Arlington Historical Society, Upper Arlington City School District, City of Upper Arlington. <<http://www.uaarchives.org/index.htm>>, accessed on 4 Oct. 2011. UA Archives is a "digital library program...to preserve original documents, photographs, maps, and other media related to the history and culture of Upper Arlington, Ohio, while offering increased visibility and improved access to these valuable primary reference sources."

government, Ben Thompson took a less prominent role in the 1920's as other members of the Village Commission discussed and debated community issues. On September 15, 1924, Ben Thompson verified charges for street repairs, contracted to the Barrett Company of Cleveland. In 1925, King Thompson represented the Upper Arlington Company at some Village Commission meetings—on November 10, appearing “before the Commission with a plat of new roads they expect to build in 1926 and other items of interest to the Village.”<sup>61</sup> On November 10, 1925, Ben Thompson asked the Commission to address two areas of Cambridge Boulevard that needed to be repaired, and D.B. Sayers received official permission to mend a leaky gutter on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In a Commission meeting of March 2, 1926, King Thompson “made the statement that the Upper Arlington Company did not have any use for the Field Office any longer and that...most of the houses that the Company owned were sold.”<sup>62</sup> The Upper Arlington Company's planned Country Club District was becoming a full-fledged community.

In 1926, the Mallway was a major topic of discussion within the municipal government. On April 6<sup>th</sup>, King Thompson voiced the importance of continuing beautification of the mall, and the King Thompson Company gave plots of land to the city for Devon Road and the mall. The Commission asked the village engineer to make new drawings. As D.B. Sayers designed and produced studies for the Village Commission, Ben Thompson took an organizational, understated role in the later 1920's—carrying, requesting, and authorizing municipal projects to improve the

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

suburb. King Thompson was more involved in the developmental Upper Arlington and King Thompson Companies: on May 3, 1927, asking the Commission to prepare the suburban streets for Ohio Bell Telephone Company underground wiring. On April 3, 1928, King Thompson requested increased and extended water supply north of Lane Avenue and west of Tremont Road.<sup>63</sup>

In the mid- and late-1920's the boundaries of Upper Arlington were changing



through annexation and incorporation, and King Thompson wanted the Village Commission to provide the new inhabitants with city services. In 1923 and 1924, the suburb annexed east and north of the original 1918 borders. At this time, Upper Arlington crossed Lane Avenue, to continue its northerly development for the following fifty years. Upper Arlington's northward expansion would continue into

**Figure 6: Annexation Map.** Original 1918 district shown in darker outline at bottom of frame; 1923 and 1924 annexations east and north of historical district shown in lighter outline. Lane Avenue runs east-west north of the Scioto Country Club. Source: Dr. Martin P. Sayers, Marjorie G. Sayers, and Elaine S. Buck. Thompson and Upper Arlington Images. Digital image. Personal Collection. Also printed in Sayers, *History of Upper Arlington*.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

the mid-1970's, finally reaching Henderson Road.

While the Thompson brothers continued to be involved with the development of Upper Arlington, the Village Commission, village engineer, and suburban inhabitants had increasing control and influence in the later 1920's. King Thompson's attention was diverted to his private real estate development interests, and Ben Thompson remained an unobtrusive, albeit very important, participant in the municipal government. As Upper Arlington grew in area and population, it was not feasible for the two brothers to oversee all aspects of development. As the United States neared the Great Depression and serious economic hardship, the aspiration of a "beautiful city on the hill above the confluence of the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers" was becoming a reality.<sup>64</sup> The King Thompson and Upper Arlington Companies, the Village Commission, and the suburb itself would change in character in the coming decade. The financial difficulties of the Great Depression, coupled with the natural growth and change of Upper Arlington, led to a situation in which the Thompson brothers were more prominent community leaders than day-to-day decision-makers.

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<sup>64</sup> Sayers, Martin Peter. "Upper Arlington History."

## Conclusion

The historical narrative of the King Thompson Company and Upper Arlington, Ohio between 1913 and 1929 is one of interaction between company and community. Upper Arlington's stages of development—and the dreams and realities of King and Ben Thompson—have great significance to a study of American urban development. Upper Arlington was, and is, both typical and atypical of urban development and community planning traditions. Additionally, the history of Upper Arlington is composed of visions meeting contingencies—leading sometimes to a conflict between plan and reality. The goals and aspirations of the Thompson brothers had mixed outcomes; the developers had both successes and shortcomings. Some of ideas and plans on which the suburb was built, such as a close relationship with the Ohio State University, live on, and continue to be central to the community, while others have been less enduring.

The Thompsons sought to create the premier suburb of Columbus, which was to be a variation of the City Beautiful and Garden City traditions. In this pursuit, the founders met contingencies, continuities, and complexities. In terms of development, in many ways, Upper Arlington mirrors much of the progressive suburban development happening in the United States during the era, including in such places as Kansas City. The brothers employed methods that incorporated landscape architecture and the protection and integration of green spaces—practices that were becoming more typical, but that were forward-looking. The brothers' twelve years of experience subdividing and developing various districts of Columbus was to come to a climax with Upper Arlington. In other ways, the suburb

was not typical. King and Ben Thompson placed great importance on fostering and preserving a sense of community in the village of Upper Arlington, hosting parties in their homes and personally underwriting many expenses, including the first loan for the Board of Education. The growth of small business and innovative business centers set the suburb apart, and continued to be relevant as Upper Arlington changed and evolved with northward expansion.

Visions and dreams meeting realities constitute the early history of Upper Arlington. Such divergence is evident through the forced imposition of Camp Willis on the young district, and the gradual loosening of complete, comprehensive urban planning under one management. The Great Depression affected the entire nation, and developers and emerging suburbs felt the repercussions. The interplay between company and community shifted, and the Thompsons filled new roles as Upper Arlington took form and began to grow and develop on its own.

King and Ben Thompson would be interested in and probably be satisfied with Upper Arlington in 2011, as the community neared the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. Upper Arlington remained a high-income suburb composed mainly of professionals and businesspeople working in central Ohio. Harder to measure, but still important, a sense of community was maintained through Fourth of July parades, ice cream socials, public lectures and film screenings, and other neighborhood events.

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